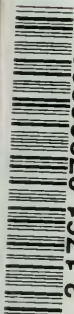


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AND EXTRA PORTRAIT

from the original copper-plates engraved in 1802

BY

ROBERT CROMEK

FROM DRAWINGS BY

THOMAS STOTHARD, R.A. 0

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JOHN OLDCASTLE.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

In the days when wood-engraving as now practised, and when lithography, zincography, photography, and the thousand and one mechanical processes for cheap and direct reproduction of the artist's drawing were practically unknown, illustrations were perforce almost entirely confined to direct impressions from engraved copperplates. The minor as well as the more important works of the best engravers of that elastic period find a safe refuge in the folio of the art collector. But only a few of the original copperplates have escaped the melting pot, and impressions from some of the more finely engraved of these are here presented. Each one has been carefully and separately struck off direct from the original copperplate itself—the only method of printing by which the minuteness and beauty of the engraved work can be properly rendered.

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Drawn by T. Stothard F.R.S.

Engraved by R.H. Cromer

Published March 9th 1780, by Cadell & Davies Strand.



The Author.



ESSNER was what the poet of Switzerland should be—a pastoral poet. The high valleys and upland features of the Alpine Republic belong to the shepherd and his herds and flocks more than do the fattest meadows of level countries. Most of the worthies of Switzerland,

however, sprang from the lake-side city, grim Geneva; Gessner was one of the few who represented the mountain feeling. He was called accordingly, in the taste of the time, the Swiss Theocritus. One of his chief works, it is true, is an epic poem on the Biblical subject of the death of Abel; but his Idylls are more characteristic of him as a poet who, though not precisely a shepherd himself, loved to practise "Contemplations amid the Grass," contemplations which were sometimes Swiss, and sometimes classical according to the eighteenth century manner.

Solomon Gessner was born in 1730, in Zurich, where German is the literary language; his father being a bookseller and printer—bookseller was the word of the day, but we should call Gessner now a publisher, and an eminent one. When

Solomon succeeded his father, he was able to live free from the cares of business, and to follow up his liberal education by study and travel. Almost all he wrote was given to the world before he was thirty. "Erastus," one of his dramas, was played with applause in Vienna and at Leipsic. His "Death of Abel" was translated into English separately, and then re-translated and published among his complete works in English prose, with Stothard's illustrations.

Catherine II. of Russia sent him a gold medal as a mark of her esteem, and he became a literary lion as well as a civic dignitary of his Canton. He died, Magistrate of Zurich, at the age of fifty-five.

Gessner dabbled in Art to some good purpose, first as a designer of decorations

for books, and then as a landscape etcher and engraver. He worked diligently from nature. Among the books he decorated was his own translation of Swift into German.





The Artist and the Engraver.



HOMAS Stothard, R.A., has lived on in general estimation when the names of many of his contemporaries of larger powers are hardly to be found out of the catalogues of collections. For there is perhaps not a book owner in England who has not on his

shelves some little volumes in calf, with embrowned paper and faded ink, and a fascinating vignette of Stothard's at the heading of chapter or poem. If, as is computed, he produced some five thousand designs, of which three thousand were engraved, it is no wonder that he should be familiar in our old books. And he greatly becomes them, as they do him. The page and the type suit him as well as do the manners and the sentiment of the authors.

Stothard made his unpromising beginning as the son of a London publican, in 1755. Some inclination for Art which he displayed caused him to be set to making patterns for brocades in the days when brocaded silks were the dignified wear of ladies. But the fashion passed away, and Stothard would have been left without

employment, had he not at once aimed at higher things and taken up the illustration of magazines. Encouraged by success, he applied himself seriously, became a student at the Academy, and in due time an Associate and Academician, and finally Librarian. Nevertheless he would not attend the Academy dinners, on the curious ground that they were too exclusive. Stothard's oil painting shews his defects emphatically—defects which the graceful decorative character of his designs for black and white seems to excuse. His last works were illustrations for the poems of his friend Rogers. His was hardly a vigorous genius, and Richardson and Rogers and Gessner were kindred spirits to him. But whatever he lacked in fire, he was rich in tenderness and beauty. Some of his female figures are so lovely

in line that to match them we must skip all the black and white designs produced in England from the day of Stothard to that of Du Maurier.

Robert Cromek was a pupil of Bartolozzi, and did a great deal of engraving after Stothard. He became a printseller as well as a print-maker, and in the former capacity was unpopular with the artists. He has an interest for our time on account of his connexion with Blake, whom he induced to illustrate Blair's "Grave," and with whom he had so bitter a quarrel that Blake wrote of him :—

"Cromek loves artists as he loves his meat,
He loves the art, but 'tis the art to cheat."

Blake's accusations, however, were refuted by Cromek's son.



THE VISION OF CUPID .

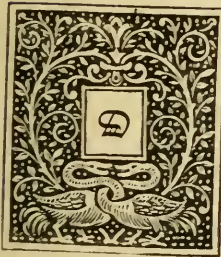
Published March, 9th 1802, by Cadell & Davies . Strand .



The Illustrations.



THE VISION OF CUPID.



AMON, the Shepherd, was held to be a son of Apollo, so like was he to the God when he guarded the flocks of Admetus. For of all the neighbouring hamlets no swain was so beautiful, or so wise, or so skilful upon the ivory lyre.

"He understood the influence of the stars, he knew the nature and properties of every plant and herb that grew. He was the oracle of the country around him. He was the best

poet too, and his songs were eagerly learnt by every shepherd of the hamlet. When he sat by his flock in the meads, the swains and maidens assembled to listen to his strains: they collected around him, as the sheep at noon encircle a spreading tree, whose shading branches protect them from the sun. They listened to his songs till they forgot all earthly objects, and imagined themselves among the Gods. Nature had even endowed him with other talents; he possessed the art of carving images in wood, which were placed in the temples of the Gods; the statues of the nymphs in the grot were the work of his skilful hand; and he had placed an image of Pan in the neighbouring thicket, under the shade of one of the loftiest oaks.

“He had formed too, a statue of Cupid. The little God might have been recognised even without his arrows or his quiver: his speaking smile, his animated attitude betrayed him. The shepherd had placed this image within a little bower in his orchard: and once, as by moonlight he chaunted songs in praise of love, he suddenly heard a rustling among the leaves, soft as when zephyrs sport among the flowers, and perceived a perfume sweeter than roses diffuse itself around. The God of Love appeared before him, borne upon a silvery cloud, and surrounded by little fluttering Cupids; some of them perched upon the trembling sprays of the bower, and some frolicked from flower to flower, like bees among the newly expanded blossoms.”

The God declares his divinity and his power, and promises his votary more than human felicity. Accordingly, the happy Damon, finding that some unknown hand nightly wreathed the image with flowers, keeps watch, and surprises the confessions of a maiden lovelier than Juno, who has long pined for him.



CUPID TRYING HIS ARROWS.

Published March 9th 1802 by Colcl & Davies Strand.



CUPID TRYING HIS ARROWS.



THE Shepherd has seen Daphne stepping down in her blue robe to lave her face and feet, and then waiting until the last ripple of her coming shall have passed away, so that she might knot her hair by the mirror of the nymphs. Bending delighted over her pleasing task, she has dropped a posy from her breast, which has been borne to the place where the Shepherd lay.

"I seized it, I kissed it! I would not have parted with it for a whole flock: but ah! the nosegay fades, alas! it withers; and two days only have passed, since I caught it from the stream.

How I cherished it ! I placed it in the goblet that I won last spring as the prize of song. Cupid is represented on that cup, sitting in a bower of sweet briar ; smiling, he tries the sharpness of his arrows with the points of his rosy fingers, and two doves are fluttering before him. Three times each day I poured fresh water to my flowers, and placed them each night at my window to imbibe the cold refreshing dews. I bent over them, and exhaled their soft fragrance ; sweeter were their perfumes, more glowing their colours, than those of all the flowers of the spring, for Oh ! they bloomed on her breast !—I stood musing before the goblet. Yes, Love ! I said, thy arrows are sharp : how deeply do I feel their wounds."



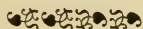


THE SACRIFICE TO PAN.

Published March 9th 1862 by Cadell & Davies, Strand.



THE SACRIFICE TO PAN.



LEXIS and Chloe are two innocent young ancient Greeks of the last century, whose father, Menalcas, is stricken with illness. The children plead for his restoration.

"*Chloe.* Hear, brother, what I intend. I rose early, and went out to gather fresh flowers to make these garlands, and I am going to offer them before the image of Pan; for thou knowest my mother has told us that the Gods are merciful, and listen with pleasure to the prayers of innocence. I will go, and lay these garlands at his feet: and see! here in this cage what I love dearest in the world, my little bird—this will I sacrifice to him.

"*Alexis.* My dear sister ! I will go with thee : wait only a moment for me : I will take a basket full of our finest fruit, and my dove. I will carry it too as a sacrifice.

"He ran and soon returned : hand in hand they approached the image of Pan, which stood on a hill at a little distance, under the thick shade of some fig-trees."

Alexis and Chloe are stopped by a celestial voice as, averting their eyes, they seize their victims with trembling hands, and are bidden to refrain from the sacrifice, for Pan has already heard them, and Menalcas will be healed.





THE YOUTH'S DREAM OF MELIDA.

Published March 9th 1802. by G. G. & Davies, Strand



*THE YOUTH'S DREAM
OF MELIDA.*



HE promontory on which Mylon and Semira had their home was severed from the mainland one night by a terrific earthquake, and there was no boat in those days to cross the water. Thus, after the death of Mylon, Semira lived alone with her daughter Melida, who had never looked on the face of youth or maid. Semira would not allow her

child to know anything of the joys she could not share ; but when Melida came to the age of woman she wondered why her lambs and her birds were at play with their companions, while she was solitary. Learning her own loneliness she grew weary of her innocent pursuits. But Cupid visited a lovely youth on the mainland with a dream.

“ He thought he stood on the shore of the island, and beheld little love-gods fluttering among the shade with melancholy gestures, or mourning on the bending boughs, and drooping flowers. As he gazed intent on the scene before him, he beheld, advancing with slow step through the tufted thicket, a maiden, fair as love and imagination can pourtray. She seemed wrapped in deep thought ; her slender form was bent in meditation, and she passed along in pensive loveliness. A part of her luxuriant light hair flowed over her shoulders, and on the brilliant whiteness of her neck and bosom ; and a part was fastened in a knot with negligent simplicity, and confined by a wreath of myrtle : her cheeks were pale, and looked like gathered roses expiring on a maiden's breast. Her large blue eyes swam in tears. She passed on, and heeded not the zephyr which played with her robe, nor the rosy fruit which hung on every side, nor the beauteous flowers which sprang beneath her feet, and offered up their richest perfumes to charm her. She bent her steps towards the shore ; she gazed with melancholy eyes on the distant land, just perceptible through the blue mists that hung over the tide : she raised her snowy arms, and appeared to supplicate assistance. The youth imagined he passed over the water, and hastened to her. He thought Cupid received him on the shady shore, and led the fair one to his arms ; while little love-gods, sporting around, crowned them with flowers, and fanned them with their

perfumed wings. The slumberer's heart beat quick, his cheek glowed with deeper crimson, and his raised arms embraced the yielding air."

Then the youth, for a dream's sake, made himself a boat, and passed over the abysses of the sea to win the maid of the island.





IN THE COTTAGE OF SEMIRA.



WHEN the youth lands upon the solitary island, Semira thinks that one of the immortals has visited them, and Melida welcomes the being she has longed for but never imagined, with all the innocent rapture of Miranda.

“ ‘ Oh ! beloved mother, (said Melida) how kind are the Gods thus to listen to my wishes, and to create this lovely creature on purpose for me. See, mother, this fair creature is just about as tall as I am ; not little, as you tell me I was, when first you found me under the rose-bushes.’ ”

“ Semira said, ‘ Let us recover from our surprize : seat yourselves near me, my children ; and good youth ! again let me bid thee welcome to our hut : no evil intention can have guided thy



IN THE COTTAGE OF SEMIRA.

Published March, 9th 1802, by Cadell & Davies Strand.

steps. Tell us whence thou comest, and by what means thou hast reached this solitary shore.'

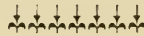
"Hand in hand, Melida and the youth now seated themselves, and he began his narration. He related to them, how a God had presented the beauteous image of Melida to him in a dream ; how he had loved her ; what torments he had hopelessly suffered when he considered the ocean divided them ; how at length he had formed a vessel, and providing it with wooden feet, had ventured alone on the wide ocean : and, finally, how by the assistance of the Gods, he had arrived in safety on this shore."

Thus began the art of navigation.





THE SON OF ERASTUS AND
THE LITTLE GOAT-HERD.



HE opening of the admired drama, "Erastus," shows the distress of the hero who, for the sake of wedding Lucinda, has been disowned by his father, Cleon, and who is sinking into hopeless poverty.

Returning with his gun from his unsuccessful hunting he meets his little son.

"Son. My dear father !

"Erastus. My dearest child ! whence come you so gay ?

"Son. From the hill, yonder, where I have been sitting with the little goat-herd. How I pity him !



A SON OF ERASTUS &
THE LITTLE GOATHERD.

Published March 9th 1850 by Lindell & Davis Grand

"*Erastus.* Why, my child?

"*Son.* He sat by his goats and wept. 'I have not eat a morsel the whole day,' said he, 'and I am famished with hunger.' There is something for thee, said I, and gave him the bread I had for my dinner, which I had kept. To be sure I was hungry myself, but it gave me pleasure to see him eat so heartily, and be so thankful.

"*Erastus.* Good child! God will bless thee.

"*Son.* I think poor little Felix would have done as much for me, if he had seen me crying for hunger.

"*Erastus.* Didst thou know that we had no more bread in the house?

"*Son.* Yes; and I was glad I had a bit to give him. You know you have always told me that God will take care of those who do good to others.

"*Erastus.* Embrace me, my child. Oh Heaven! thou wilt not suffer such innocence to perish in misery? (*Wiping his eyes*)."

Erastus and his family continue in the path of virtue, but the ill-deeds of the less admirable Simon are the means of bringing Cleon once more to the arms of his son.





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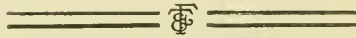
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